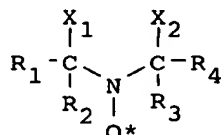


Amendments to the Claims:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) In a process for the production and purification ~~by distillation~~ ~~operation~~ of unsaturated monomers employing distillation means and a nitroxyl-containing ~~polymer growth~~ polymerization inhibitor of said monomers, wherein a process stream containing ~~nitroxyl~~ the nitroxyl-containing inhibitor is removed downstream of the distillation ~~operation~~ means and returned to the process ahead of the distillation ~~operation~~ means, the improvement which comprises recycling said stream containing ~~nitroxyl~~ the nitroxyl-containing inhibitor into the distillation means, wherein the temperature in the distillation means is at a temperature no higher than about 110° C.

2. (Original) The process of claim 1 wherein the nitroxyl-containing inhibitor is of the following structural formula:



wherein

R₁ and R₄ are independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, alkyl, and heteroatom-substituted alkyl;

R₂ and R₃ are independently selected from the group consisting of alkyl and heteroatom-substituted alkyl; and

X₁ and X₂

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- (1) are independently selected from the group consisting of halogen, cyano, amido, $-S-C_6H_5$,
carbonyl, alkenyl, alkyl of 1 to 15 carbon atoms, $COOR_7$, $-S-COR_7$, and $-OCOR_7$,
wherein R_7 is alkyl or aryl, or
- (2) taken together, form a ring structure with the nitrogen.

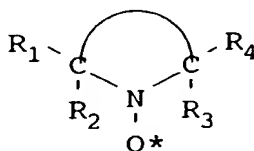
3 -7 (Canceled)

8. (Previously Amended) The process of claim 1 wherein the distillation process occurs at pressures less than 760 mm Hg.

9. (Previously Amended) The process of claim 1 wherein the distillation is a continuous operation.

10 - 16 (Canceled)

17. (Original) The process of claim 2 wherein the nitroxyl-containing inhibitor is of the structure



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wherein R₁ and R₄ are independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, alkyl, and heteroatom-substituted alkyl and R₂ and R₃ are independently selected from the group consisting of alkyl and heteroatom-substituted alkyl, and the



portion represents the atoms necessary to form a five-, six-, or seven-membered heterocyclic ring.

18. (Original) The process of claim 2 wherein the inhibitor is a blend of two nitroxyls.

19. (Original) The process of claim 17 wherein the inhibitor contains one or more nitroxyls selected from the group consisting of:

N,N-di-*tert*-butylnitroxide;

N,N-di-*tert*-amylnitroxide;

N-*tert*-butyl-2-methyl-1-phenyl-propylnitroxide;

N-*tert*-butyl-1-diethylphosphono-2,2-dimethylpropylnitroxide;

2,2,6,6-tetramethyl-piperidinyloxy;

4-amino-2,2,6,6-tetramethyl-piperidinyloxy;

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4-hydroxy-2,2,6,6-tetramethyl-piperidinyloxy;
4-oxo-2,2,6,6-tetramethyl-piperidinyloxy;
4-dimethylamino-2,2,6,6-tetramethyl-piperidinyloxy;
4-ethanoyloxy-2,2,6,6-tetramethyl-piperidinyloxy;
2,2,5,5-tetramethylpyrrolidinyloxy;
3-amino-2,2,5,5-tetramethylpyrrolidinyloxy;
2,2,4,4-tetramethyl-1-oxa-3-azacyclopentyl-3-oxy;
2,2,4,4-tetramethyl-1-oxa-3-pyrrolinyl-1-oxy-3-carboxylic acid;
2,2,3,3,5,5,6,6-octamethyl-1,4-diazacyclohexyl-1,4-dioxy;
4-bromo-2,2,6,6-tetramethyl-piperidinyloxy;
4-chloro-2,2,6,6-tetramethyl-piperidinyloxy;
4-iodo-2,2,6,6-tetramethyl-piperidinyloxy;
4-fluoro-2,2,6,6-tetramethyl-piperidinyloxy;
4-cyano-2,2,6,6-tetramethyl-piperidinyloxy;
4-carboxy-2,2,6,6-tetramethyl-piperidinyloxy;
4-carbomethoxy-2,2,6,6-tetramethyl-piperidinyloxy;
4-carbethoxy-2,2,6,6-tetramethyl-piperidinyloxy;
4-cyano-4-hydroxy-2,2,6,6-tetramethyl-piperidinyloxy;
4-methyl-2,2,6,6-tetramethyl-piperidinyloxy;
4-carbethoxy-4-hydroxy-2,2,6,6-tetramethyl-piperidinyloxy;
4-hydroxy-4-(1-hydroxypropyl)-2,2,6,6-tetramethyl-piperidinyloxy;
4-methyl-2,2,6,6-tetramethyl-1,2,5,6-tetrahydropyridine -1-oxyl;

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4-carboxy-2,2,6,6-tetramethyl-1,2,5,6-tetrahydropyridine -1-oxyl;
4-carbomethoxy-2,2,6,6-tetramethyl-1,2,5,6-tetrahydropyridine -1-oxyl;
4-carbethoxy-2,2,6,6-tetramethyl-1,2,5,6-tetrahydropyridine -1-oxyl;
4-amino-2,2,6,6-tetramethyl-1,2,5,6-tetrahydropyridine -1-oxyl;
4-amido-2,2,6,6-tetramethyl-1,2,5,6-tetrahydropyridine -1-oxyl;
3,4-diketo-2,2,5,5-tetramethylpyrrolidinyloxy;
3-keto-4-oximino-2,2,5,5-tetramethylpyrrolidinyloxy;
3-keto-4-benzylidene-2,2,5,5-tetramethylpyrrolidinyloxy;
3-keto-4,4-dibromo-2,2,5,5-tetramethylpyrrolidinyloxy;
2,2,3,3,5,5-hexamethylpyrrolidinyloxy;
3-carboximido-2,2,5,5-tetramethylpyrrolidinyloxy;
3-oximino-2,2,5,5-tetramethylpyrrolidinyloxy;
3-hydroxy-2,2,5,5-tetramethylpyrrolidinyloxy;
3-cyano-3-hydroxy-2,2,5,5-tetramethylpyrrolidinyloxy;
3-carbomethoxy-3-hydroxy-2,2,5,5-tetramethylpyrrolidinyloxy;
3-carbethoxy-3-hydroxy-2,2,5,5-tetramethylpyrrolidinyloxy;
2,2,5,5-tetramethyl-3-carboxamido-2,5-dihydropyrrole-1-oxyl;
2,2,5,5-tetramethyl-3-amino-2,5-dihydropyrrole-1-oxyl;
2,2,5,5-tetramethyl-3-carbethoxy-2,5-dihydropyrrole-1-oxyl;
2,2,5,5-tetramethyl-3-cyano-2,5-dihydropyrrole-1-oxyl;
bis(1-oxyl-2,2,6,6-tetramethylpiperidin-4-yl)succinate;

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bis(1-oxyl-2,2,6,6-tetramethylpiperidin-4-yl)adipate;
bis(1-oxyl-2,2,6,6-tetramethylpiperidin-4-yl)sebacate;
bis(1-oxyl-2,2,6,6-tetramethylpiperidin-4-yl)n-butylmalonate;
bis(1-oxyl-2,2,6,6-tetramethylpiperidin-4-yl)phthalate;
bis(1-oxyl-2,2,6,6-tetramethylpiperidin-4-yl)isophthalate;
bis(1-oxyl-2,2,6,6-tetramethylpiperidin-4-yl)terephthalate;
bis(1-oxyl-2,2,6,6-tetramethylpiperidin-4-yl)hexahydroterephthalate;
N,N'-bis(1-oxyl-2,2,6,6-tetramethylpiperidin-4-yl)adipamide;
N-(1-oxyl-2,2,6,6-tetramethylpiperidin-4-yl)-caprolactam;
N-(1-oxyl-2,2,6,6-tetramethylpiperidin-4-yl)-dodecylsuccinimide;
2,4,6-tris-[N-butyl-N-(1-oxyl-2,2,6,6-tetramethylpiperidin-4-yl)]-s-triazine; and
4,4'-ethylenebis(1-oxyl-2,2,6,6-tetramethylpiperazin-3-one).